

John Forsyth to Andrew Jackson, February 4, 1836, from Correspondence of Andrew Jackson. Edited by John Spencer Bassett.

SECRETARY FORSYTH TO JACKSON.

Confidential Report.

Department of State, February 4, 1836.

Mr. Bankhead called at the Office and received from the hands of the Secretary the answer to his note of the 27th ult.¹ By the instructions of the President the Secretary asked what assurances could be given by Mr. Bankhead of the intentions of the French Government as to the mediation and in the maritime preparations making in all the principal French ports. Mr. Bankhead replied that he could give no public, official, assurances, but from a despatch written by the Duke de Broglie to Count Sebastiani,² which had been confidentially furnished to Lord Palmerston, a copy of which was read to the Secretary of State on the 27th ult: the British Government was assured that the French fleet would not even set sail for the West Indies until the Presidents annual message was received in France, that the naval preparations of the French Government are of a purely defensive character, and are not in the slightest degree indications of aggressive intentions; that he (Mr. B.) could not say officially that France had accepted or would accept the mediation, but from all the circumstances within his knowledge he had no doubt France had or would accept it.

¹ Charles Bankhead was the British chargé in Washington. It was his offer of mediation on Jan. 27, 1836, that led to the settlement of the dispute with France. See C. K. Webster,

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“British Mediation between France and the United States in 1834–6”, in *English Historical Review*, XLII. 50–78.

2 French ambassador in London.

Respectfully submitted,